



# Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown  
Eastern District of California

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**FAIRFIELD MAN INDICTED FOR FALSELY PRESENTING HIMSELF  
AS AN ENROLLED AGENT CERTIFIED BY IRS**

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal grand jury returned a 17-count indictment charging KEITH THAYER TOWNS, 46, of Fairfield, Calif., with 16 felony charges of false statements to IRS and one misdemeanor charge for misusing the name of the IRS.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Samantha S. Spangler, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that from March 2004 to March 2009, TOWNS submitted Power of Attorney forms to the IRS in which he falsely represented that he was an Enrolled Agent certified by the IRS. The indictment further alleges that from at least October 16, 2003, to March 2009, TOWNS's Web site for his business, Emerge Financial Group, advertised that he was an Enrolled Agent for the IRS.

"Paid preparers are a critical component and stakeholder in tax administration," said J. Russell George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. "When preparers overstate their professional qualifications, it impacts taxpayers' faith in the tax system."

The maximum statutory penalty for each false statement charge is five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a three-year term of supervised release. The maximum statutory penalty for a misuse of the IRS's name is one year in prison, a \$100,000 fine, and a one-year term of supervised release. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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